

§ 3002.13 Office of the General Counsel.

(a) The General Counsel directs and coordinates the functions of the Office of the General Counsel. The General Counsel does not appear as an attorney in any proceeding before the Commission and takes no part in the preparation of evidence or argument presented in such hearings.

(b) The Office of the General Counsel provides legal assistance on matters involving the Commission's responsibilities; defends Commission decisions before the courts; and advises the Commission on the legal aspects of proposed legislation, rulemaking, and policies on procurement, contracting, personnel matters, ethics, and other internal legal matters.

§ 3002.14 The Public Representative.

(a) Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 505, the Commission appoints a staff member, on a case-by-case basis, to serve as a representative of the general public's interests in public proceedings before the Commission. This appointee is called the Public Representative.

(b) Individuals appointed to represent the general public are subject to the same ex parte prohibitions as apply to all other interested persons in the cases to which they are assigned to the role of the Public Representative.

§ 3002.15 Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations.

(a) The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations facilitates prompt and responsive communications for the Commission with the public, members of Congress, the Postal Service, state and local governments, and the media.

(b) The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations has three primary areas of responsibility: Government Relations, Consumer Affairs, and Communications.

(1) *Government Relations.* The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations is the principal liaison between the Commission and Members of Congress. It develops and maintains effective working relationships with Congressional staff; monitors legislative activity; and advises the Commission and its staff on legislative actions and

policies related to the Commission and its mission. The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations works in conjunction with all Commission offices to ensure that lawmakers are informed of regulatory decisions and policies and that the Commission is responsive to Congressional inquiries for technical information. The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations also prepares Commissioners and Commission staff when called upon to provide Congressional testimony.

(2) *Consumer Affairs.* As the principal source of outreach and education to the public, the Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations provides information to postal consumers and assists in the resolution of rate and service inquiries from members of the public pursuant to part 3031 of this chapter. It supports the impartial resolution of those inquiries through use of the Postal Service's Office of Consumer Advocate and reports the results to the Commission. The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations also utilizes procedures available under the Commission's rules and applicable law to assist relevant stakeholders in appeals of Postal Service decisions to close or consolidate individual post offices; maintains a record of service-related inquiries; and posts calendar updates and other public information on the Commission's Web site.

(3) *Communication.* The Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations also develops public outreach strategies for the Commission, responds to media inquiries, and disseminates information concerning Commission decisions and activities to the public.

§ 3002.16 Office of Inspector General.

(a) The Office of Inspector General has the duty and responsibility to:

(1) Provide policy direction and conduct, supervise, and coordinate audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations of the Commission;

(2) Review existing and proposed legislation and regulations relating to programs and operations of the Commission;

(3) Make recommendations in semi-annual reports concerning the impact of such legislation or regulations on